



Bosnia UPDATE

A Summary of Developments Affecting the Balkans and the Deployment of U.S. Armed Forces by the Staff of the Committee on National Security.

Lloyd Spence, Chairman

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Quotes of the Week:

"The situation that this country faces is a result of military conflict, and perhaps it would take a war to undo [its problems] really fully, effectively."

-- Robert Frowick, chief of OSCE mission in Bosnia, 8/16/96

"It just shows how perverted this whole election process is. This election will take a guy like that and legitimize him. That's why this process is so scary."

-- U.S. official working with the OSCE, commenting on Vojkan Djurkovic, a Bosnian Serb military commander running for election in September, 8/22/96

"It is clear manipulation on a massive scale of registration of refugees.... The results of obvious manipulation must be undone."

-- Michael Steiner, Office of the UN High Representative, 8/23/96

"Results of the registration for the September election herald a dismal future for multi-ethnicity in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

-- Soren Jessen-Petersen, UN High Commissioner for Refugees envoy, 8/26/96

"Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Muslims have grown further apart — not closer together — in their visions for the country."

-- U.S. Information Agency analysis of poll data, 8/22/96

In Bosnia and the Balkans:

Media reports indicate that the U.S. is planning to deploy a force of 5,000 troops, 50 tanks, and 50 infantry fighting vehicles to Bosnia beginning in October as part of a follow-on multinational peacekeeping mission. The "IFOR-2" force will initially assist already-deployed troops to withdraw safely, but will reportedly remain in Bosnia for up to one year. U.S. allies have reportedly been informed of the U.S. willingness to participate in the follow-on force, although a final decision is not anticipated until after the U.S. elections in November.

The first American bases in Bosnia close as part of a restructuring of the U.S. military contingent in IFOR. Heavy equipment is replaced by lighter and more mobile vehicles and equipment.

A NATO spokesman denies reports that IFOR troops confiscated a cache of weapons at the Serb-controlled site in Han Pijesak that IFOR was originally prevented from inspecting. He says that NATO at first refused to conduct the inspection when Ratko Mladic was offered by the Serbs to be the inspection guide because this was a violation of NATO's right to "unconditional" access. Other reports have

speculated that NATO withdrew due to concern over confronting Mladic.

NATO forces begin destroying three hundred tons of illegal munitions, which were confiscated by IFOR troops at an unauthorized Bosnian Serb army site in Margetici. The planned destruction, called Operation Volcano, is condemned by Bosnian Serb military officers, who say the arms cache is "for the protection of the Serb people." Bosnian Serb authorities threaten retribution for the action.

The airport at Sarajevo is reopened to commercial air traffic. Secretary of State Christopher, visiting Sarajevo, says the reopening "is the newest symbol of this city's reintegration with the world."

Bosnian Serbs attack UN vehicles and threaten UN policemen after U.S. troops stop them from attacking Muslims in Mahala, in northeastern Bosnia. U.S. forces detain and later release at least 35 Bosnian Serb policemen who participated in the attacks.

The first military equipment delivered under the arm-and-train program, including U.S.-made tanks and rifles, arrives in Bosnia for use by the Bosnian Federation army.

Bosnian President Izetbegovic criticizes implementation of the Dayton peace accord, saying that the Bosnian people are being forced to accept a situation that they fought

against during years of conflict. He notes, "As days go by, our doubts and questions are multiplying."

UN High Representative for Bosnia Carl Bildt expresses "deep disquiet" about reports that Bosnian Serbs are manipulating voter registration in advance of the elections scheduled for September 14. He says, "One option is to annul the registrations for towns like Brcko and Srebrenica as obviously rigged. The figures are simply not credible." Swiss Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairman, Flavio Cotti, says "serious infractions of elections procedures have taken place" and threaten to distort the outcome of local elections. The main Muslim party announces it will consider boycotting the elections unless a solution to the problem is found.

Robert Frowick, the OSCE chief of mission in Bosnia, announces that municipal elections scheduled throughout Bosnia on September 14 will be postponed possibly until next spring because of "widespread abuse of rules and regulations," especially by Bosnian Serbs. He calls the elections a "snake pit" and cites evidence of Serb plans to flood Muslim towns with tens of thousands of Serb voters to ensure they will be under Serb political governance. Bosnian Serbs reject the decision and say they will proceed with their own elections.

A poll conducted by the U.S. Information Agency shows that 95 percent of Bosnian Serbs and two-thirds of Bosnian Croats oppose a unified Bosnian state. The poll shows that 96 percent of Serbs and 90 percent of Croats believe it is "inevitable that the country will be partitioned into three ethnic communities." Ninety-seven percent of Bosnia's Muslims support a unified state, with eight in ten believing "we will ultimately be able to live in peace together."

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Yugoslavia and Croatia sign an agreement to restore diplomatic relations and economic links. The document, which refers to Eastern Slavonia as "the Croatian Danube region," is seen as a recognition by Serbian President Milosevic that the region is part of Croatia.

In Washington:

The State Department expresses concern about reports that Jordanian UN officials are using Bosnia as part of a covert pipeline for drug smuggling and says that the U.S. will work with Bosnia to stop it.

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The State Department, commenting on reports of massive fraud and irregularities in the registration process for the Bosnian elections, says the OSCE "has taken proper action to correct these irregularities." In response to the deferment of municipal elections, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Kornblum says, "We think, in fact, it's a very clear and decisive step" and a demonstration that violations of the election rules "will not be tolerated."

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Republican Presidential nominee Robert Dole says the September 14 Bosnian presidential and parliamentary elections are "a sham in the making" and calls on the Clinton Administration to postpone them.

In Bonn:

German Defense Minister Volker Ruehe says it may be necessary to keep an international force of about 20,000 military personnel in Bosnia after the one-year deadline expires in order to maintain the peace.

Compliance Watch:

Croatia arrests a former Bosnian military official in Istria, near the Croatian border, and accuses him of war crimes. The arrest is seen as a violation of the Dayton accord since the man is not listed by the War Crimes Tribunal as a war crimes suspect.

Senior NATO and international officials say that members of opposition parties in Bosnia are being terrorized and intimidated in an organized campaign that is controlled by the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government and that threatens fair elections next month. The intimidation includes secret police tactics, threats, beatings, and bombings. The campaign is believed to be organized by the Agency for Investigation and Documentation. According to the OSCE, ten opposition spokesmen have ended their candidacies in Zavidovici, near Zenica in central Bosnia, as a result of the intimidation campaign. Canadian IFOR troops raid offices of the Agency for Investigation and Documentation in Velika Kladusa, in northern Bosnia, to protest the campaign of intimidation.

Two shootings occur in the Sarajevo suburb of Dobrinja as a Muslim policemen and two other Bosnian Muslims are severely wounded, presumably by Bosnian Serbs.

Previous issues of the Update are archived on the world wide web site of the House National Security Committee at: <http://www.house.gov/nsc/bosnia.htm>. Additional background information on any of the items in this UPDATE may be obtained from Tom Donnelly (x65372), David Trachtenberg (x60532), Will Marsh (x56045) on the Committee staff.